
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6542

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF FARMLAND AT THE SOUTHBURY TRAINING SCHOOL.

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes a procedure to preserve and manage state-owned property known as the "Farm at the Southbury Training School."

The bill requires the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) commissioner to transfer the care, custody, and control of the property to the Department of Agriculture (DOAG) commissioner, who must grant a permanent conservation easement on it to a nonprofit organization.

It specifies that the easement must (1) provide for conservation of the farm for agricultural use and (2) allow the DOAG commissioner to lease, permit, or license farm property for such use. The proposed easement and any proposed DOAG lease, permit, or license is subject to State Properties Review Board (SPRB) review and approval.

The bill exempts the leased, permitted, or licensed property from local property taxes and adds its value to the assessed value of state-owned land and buildings for calculating state payments in lieu of taxes. By law, the state must reimburse towns for 45% of their lost revenue from state-owned property.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

SOUTHBURY TRAINING SCHOOL PROPERTY

Transfer and Easement

The bill requires the DDS commissioner to transfer the care, custody, and control of the land and buildings that comprise the "Farm

at the Southbury Training School” to the DOAG commissioner. The DOAG commissioner must obtain a survey of the property that conforms to a horizontal Class A-2 (boundary) survey.

The DOAG commissioner must grant to a nonprofit organization, whose mission includes protecting agricultural lands for agricultural use, a permanent conservation easement on the property, based on the survey. The easement must (1) provide for conservation of the farm for agricultural use and (2) allow the DOAG commissioner to lease, permit, or license any part of the farm to one or more people for agricultural uses.

Under the bill, the leases, permits, or licenses must (1) be for a term of up to 15 years and (2) comply with the permanent conservation easement. They are renewable for up to 15 years.

State Properties Review Board Review

The bill requires the SPRB to review and approve the permanent conservation easement and any lease, permit, or license of the land. The board must complete its review within 30 days after receiving the proposed easement or any proposed lease, permit, or license from the DOAG commissioner.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 28 Nay 0 (03/27/2013)